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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 6 NO. 11
FIRST ISSUE OF
JULY 1976
#133

BICENTENNIAL EDITION

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LETTERS

I greatly enjoyed Mr. Peter Putnam Bretz's gleeful recounting of his tipping policy during his "Railpass Ramblings" (last issue). This policy has no doubt achieved much: Mr. Bretz felt good, sullen waiters and porters got more sullen, and nothing changed in the least.

I have never had the time or money to travel 20,000 miles in 24 days, but in my 30,000 miles over six years I've met my share of ill-tempered dining car personnel. It's maddening, but I prefer to direct my anger at the causes of poor service: 20 or more years of the cultivation of poor morale by the railroads and four of the same from the Lewis Amtrak.

Also, has Mr. Bretz ever noticed what the crews have to put up with from the average non-railfan Amtrak passenger (let alone fans who should know better)? Inspired by the media or a few bad commuter-train experiences or memories of World War II train travel or whatever, they board the train expecting disaster and finding it in every tiny inconvenience. I've seen passengers start screaming at dining-car stewards when they weren't seated in two minutes. More than once I've seen family groups of five or more demanding to be seated together in crowded diners. The average passenger's discomfort over bad air conditioning, poor track, delays, and other disasters gets taken out on anyone handy connected with the carrier, be it conductor or pantryman (or even, in one case in my experience, some off-duty freight crewmen deadheading to Columbus). Can't blame these sullen passengers really; it's no joy to start and conclude hard-earned vacations with overnight rides in overheated coaches, and it's simply the American Way to misapply blame. But people like Mr. Bretz should know better.

I think with the Reistrup "attitude," improved working conditions in the form of better equipment and schedules, and a bit more train-sense from passengers, much of what Mr. Bretz had to complain about will change on its own. Meanwhile he might try being neutral and considerate in the face of the opposite from crewmen (this old Christian shtick does work at times), or express his complaint in words instead of symbolic actions that communicate nothing, or maybe even reassess what he expects from his trainboard servitors. Whether we like it or not, this isn't the turn of the century and "obedient servants" are no more.

Besides, for saccharin service and coffin-like "comfort" there are always airplanes.

Michael Leighton
Mt. Kisco, New York

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"A couple of years ago, when this country appeared to be running out of gas, Amtrak was the hero of a very dark hour. In Washington, the politicians congratulated themselves upon...such an energy-efficient alternative to the automobile. Everywhere, the press joined the hallelujah chorus... Memories are short. Today the politicians are being asked to take a second, and niggardly, look at Amtrak, and they are being asked to do so by no less an authority than Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman, Jr., who never tires of saying that for every $1 a passenger pays Amtrak, the federal government has to pay $1.25... Mr. Coleman has acted with sufficient wisdom and statesmanship in other transportation matters of great importance that one may reasonably hope that he can come up with better answers to Mr. Reistrup's questions than he and his staff have so far produced."

--Railway Age editorial, June 14

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ON THE COVER:

Welcome to our Bicentennial Issue (we just had to do it, since we figured RTN might not be around for a second chance 200 years from now). We hope you enjoy the special color cover prepared just for this occasion. On the front cover we picture a Bicentennial engine, Rock Island #652, whose paint scheme was designed and executed by members of Chicago's 20th Century RR Club (see Bill Benswanger's article in the First June issue of RTN). This Ektachrome slide was taken by Jack Ferry in Chicago on May 11. The red, white and light blue engine has the word "Independence" painted along the side, where "Rock Island" normally appears. The Rock's new "R" logo appears on the front, in the center of the big white star.

The rear cover presents a Ken Maylath color slide of the Amtrak COLONIAL at Newport News on June 20, with GE diesel 715, baggage, Amclub, and 3 Amcoaches. See his report beginning on page 8.

The theme of this issue was to be the beginning of the next 200 years of American passenger railroading, and on that theme we offer Al Crossley's article on Amtrak's newest, the Amfleet, starting on p. 4. We must apologize that we can't include other material we wanted to present, but in the interests of getting this issue in the mail before the Independence Day weekend (and our own vacation) we had to cut the issue down to a subnormal size--16 pages. We'll make it up later with an extra-big issue.

CARS & CONSISTS

*JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY Newport News Connection, last runs: train 450, Jun 14: engine C&O 5895 Geep; car Amtrak 5011. Train 451, June 14: engine C&O 5896 Geep; cars 5649 (thru car to Chicago), 6008 (Newport News standby car), 5011 (deadhead).

*COLONIAL, train 167, first southbd run, Jun 15: engine 713; cars 1360, 20675 (Amcafe/Amclub), 21001, 21004, 21030 (Amcoaches). (1st northbd run next day had same consist.)

*MOUNTAINEER, train 54, Petersburg VA, Jun 15: engines N&W 4110 (GP30), Amtrak 420 (engine trouble); cars 8201 "Blue Grass Club", 9560, 6066, 3253 "City of Cleveland." Train 55, same: engine 445; cars 5239, 8200 "Blue Ridge Club", 3212 "Pine Tree State", 9540 "Silver Island", N&W business car 101 in Tuscan Red.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Jun 28: engines 551, 554; cars 1046, 1401, 4535, 4815, 4865, 4861, 8105, 4532, 4544, 4842, 4855, 4499, 9374 (ex-SP dome), 8031, 2711 "Pine Beach", 2713 "Pine Cavern", 2366 "Regal Pass", 4495 (deadhead). (First use of SP dome lounge this summer was on #14 of Jun 25, and consist above is the return run of that train. Lunch counter diner now also on.)

*ST. CLAIR, train 350, Chicago May 26: engine 203 (F40); cars 21119, 21149, 21151 Amcoaches, 20131 Amcoach-Amcafe-Amclub combo.

CP Rail CANADIAN, train 2, Vancouver Jun 20: engines ?; cars 600 bag-dorm, 114 coach, 506 Skyline coffee shop-dome-coach, sleepers "Monck Manor", Chateau Marquette", diner "Kent", sleeper "Butler Manor", dome-slpr-obse "Tremblant Park."

*SAN JOAQUIN, train 710, Oakland Jun 20: engine 543; cars 1602 "Silver Salon", 8110, 6801. Train 711, same: engine 542; cars 1601 "Silver Buffet", 8117, 6802. (Train recently began using SDP40F engines instead of F units.)

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, Tucson Jun 16: engines 570, 569; cars 1054, 9915, 9936, 9925, 9907, 5235, 3393, 8500, 2759 "Palm Summit", 2371 "Regal Vale", 2370 "Regal Town", 2621 "Pacific Northwest", SP business car 141 "Oakland" (Amtrak colors), SP 100 "Airsle" (SP colors).

*PANAMA LIMITED, train 58, New Orleans Jun 19: engines 708, 718; cars 1918, 1021, 9200, 2776, 8099, 6011, 6056, 5623, 4401, 6010, 6051, 3344 (cut out of consist before departure, with brake problem).

Fleet Amfleet

by Alan Crossley

Warning bells break into a confused clamor but work around into an easy rhythm as the gates fall. A single, tall, squarish unit in a red-and-blue striped silver blazer, a breast-pocket Amtrak monogram to the lower left of its twin-beam headlight, draws slowly along the curved platform, trailing 7 or 8 well-fed looking Amcoaches. It doesn't seem that long ago that the crossing to New London's city pier was the domain of a guard with whistle and stop sign, not that long ago that those lanky, leaky E8s spun 179 in with a certain abandon, as if on the edge of control. No more.

Philadelphia-bound this Friday evening April 9, we're at the south end of the platform, well away from the crowd, planning to board the second car, the first coach behind the Amclub. It's probably a smoker, unfortunately, but it will have the greatest number of empty seats, the most privacy. A glance at the trucks on passing F40 #209 finds the brake shoes lazily dragging--he won't stop yet for a couple of carlengths, and we walk still farther forward to catch the first open vestibule. For some months now at low level platform stops the trainmen have bypassed the Amcoaches' automatic door sequence with manual operation and ridden in on the steps as of old.

Settled in 21088, we're welcomed aboard Amtrak's Amfleet and given a rundown of the train as we leave New London 11 minutes late. Not all crews do this, and some shun the PA completely. In any case, we know the way to the cafe without asking, and a sandwich supper occupies us as the pace picks up thru the gathering darkness. We slow only to tiptoe past the sleeping trolls at Old Saybrook's Connecticut River Drawbridge.

In the late fifties, the New Haven used some of its last dollars to put down welded rail on the Shore Line's eastbound track, which is still in passable shape. The jointed westbound, however, was getting very rough and was first to get attention when Amtrak began track improvements here. Resurfaced, reballasted, and given many new ties, it is now good for sustained 75-80mph running on its straighter sections. A singular new stretch of welded rail, tho, lasting several seconds, tells us we're nearing Branford and a set of slow reverse curves. We drift thru these, pass a shopping center and the Branford toll station on parallel Interstate 95, then swing northwest toward Cedar Hill yard.

Except for the opening minutes, there's been little about this trip peculiar to Amfleet. That soon changes. As we draw abreast of Cedar Hill, the conductor announces the New Haven stop over the PA. And--this is all too rare--he reminds the passengers that the lights will be out during the engine change. This is annoying, especially at night, but it is a sign of the times. For most Amfleet operation has progressed beyond the separated locomotive and head-end-power generator car--the whole train plugs directly into the F40, E60, or occasional rebuilt E8, and with no engine there can be no lights. (Small ceiling lights do stay on--moving around is no problem--but all no smoking lights go, and without any circulation, the air can thicken fast.)

New Haven arrival is nine minutes late. We detrain to watch the motive power switch. There's no steam line on an Amfleet train, but replacing it are four sets of jumper cables which must be pulled and reattached. And the car knockers can't touch these, we're told; they have to be handled by an electrician. Facing that, there's little chance of a train's picking up time on the scheduled 10-minute swap, and further delays are frequent. The F40 is at last freed, and E60 #973, a gleaming shoebox of a machine, is backed down. The coupling is what NASA would call a hard dock, and we're glad we were not in the Amclub with a drink on the tray table in front of us.

We reboard as the train is rewired with lights and air restored and wait for departure, hand on stopwatch. There it is--we leave in the as-yet record time of 10 mins, 20 secs, and find new hope for the 10-minute change.

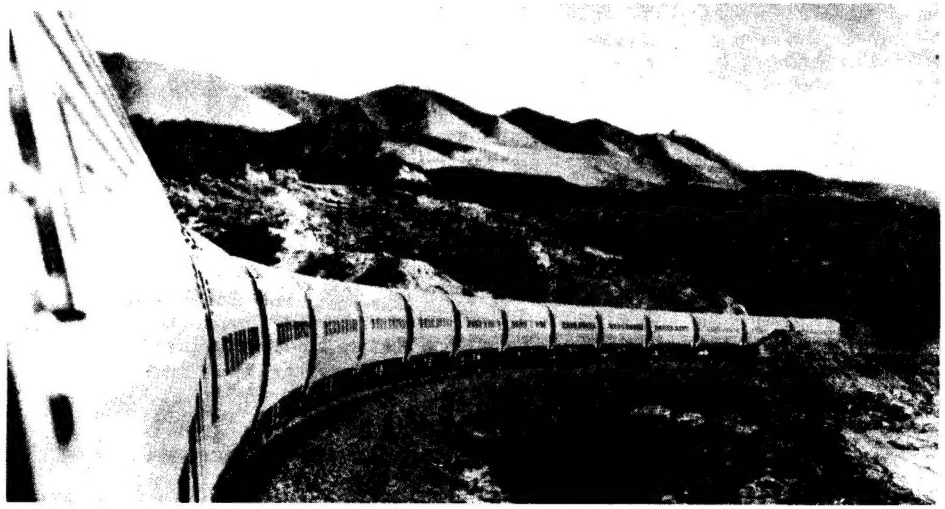
We pull away from New Haven for some of the real fun of the trip. For an Amfleet train behind an E60 is a lively, responsive thing. We swear, for example, that we feel the train jump ahead at speed in response to 973's controller. The braking is quick as well, and as we creep thru a turn here and there we wonder if the engineer really meant to dip that far into his air. But that's his job, not ours. We merely enjoy the ride and reflect that in spite of sealing us in plastic, airtight cars, Amtrak has helped keep us in touch with running a train.

We accelerate away from Stamford, 7 minutes down, whip past Old Greenwich and then fade to a medium trot at Riverside, setting ourselves for another of the line's many drawbridges. Paying close attention as the hollow roll swells under our wheels, we hear the air circulation sigh off and see the lights dim very slightly. This is the Mianus River, where for about 3 seconds 973 airs its Faively at a catenary gap and drifts across unpowered. There is usually only the momentary loss, but every so often the HEP fails to kick back in, leaving everyone in the dark for as little as a few seconds or as long as it takes to fix the unit. Tonight we're back live before the last car hits the bridge, and no one even looks up.

On into New York State we move, easing thru the curve as Port Chester, where large, mock rolls of candy glow softly in front of the Life Saver plant. Stacked up beside the GG1, the E60 is in our mind short on esthetics, but GE gave it an air horn second to none in the Corridor. We hear it now and then as we sweep thru the commuter stops. They come faster now--Rye, Harrison, Mamaroneck--as we break for New York City, trying to invest in a few minutes which will surely be spent climbing over the Hell Gate.

We slow to a walk at New Rochelle where the line splits: four tracks for Grand Central, two for Penn Station. We clump thru the junction past Shell Tower and nose left onto the Hell Gate Bridge route. Once a permanent 20-mile slow order which felt and sounded (rickety-track, rickety-track) like so much scrap, this line may soon help cut running times by several minutes. During February and March, Amtrak had the westbound iron completely rebuilt between Shell and the foot

AMFLEET HEADING WEST: Amtrak recently published this vestibule shot of the late April movement of Amfleet cars to Southern California, seen here in Cajon Pass. The cars were moved to the Coast to be placed on Western corridor runs. page 5



of the Hell Gate incline in the Bronx (about 12 miles), relaying it with welded rail and replacing most of the ties. The silence is eerie as 973 moves us smartly along, and it is at last our unspeakable pleasure to be passing up the cars on the New York State Thruway alongside. But our euphoria soon ebbs. Much of the line is still not ready for fast running, and after crossing the drawbridge at Co-op City we bow to the slow orders. At last we climb above the city--up, up toward the still magnificent, if rust- and graffiti-ridden Hell Gate Bridge. It sits veiled in spooky blackness next to the Christmas tree-bright Triborough suspension span. From here we circle right and dive about 200 feet to the bottom of the East River tunnel before reaching Penn Station 5 minutes in the hole.

Cars are sometimes added at New York, even when loads don't warrant them. At such times we find that a string of free-rolling Amcoaches, when given a healthy jolt from behind, seems to take on the characteristics of a giant Slinky. Tonight, tho, things will be quiet. We look around the car, out the window, and do a double take. Car 21088 is like any of the newer Amcoaches, with bathroom occupancy lights and reading lights on what look like movable mountings to accommodate future changes in car configuration. But its windows have the Lexan pane inside the car and the glass outside. This will reduce wear, we hope.

Number 179 pulls out of Penn Station after an unusually short stay of 8 minutes --there is generally little effort to get late trains out faster than the scheduled ten. In the last two months we've made 16 Corridor trips without once making our destination on time, and with only 3 minutes to recover by Philadelphia, things look pretty good.

We lose another minute to Newark and then, past Elizabeth, we begin to fly. There's good track to be found on this, the country's busiest stretch of line, and above it the car swings like a lazy hammock, shaken occasionally by crossover switches. The train is perhaps half full, and quiet, and the swish of air conditioning competes effectively in our ears with the rush of train wheels. The night presses closely against the small, heavily tinted windows. It is an excellent time to read or, if you don't mind sitting up, to sleep. We often begin the former, only to lapse toward the latter.

Trenton slips quietly rearward shortly before 10 o'clock. This is news, for it puts us on or very close to schedule, and we sit up a bit. We cross the Delaware and gather speed, and the thought is insistent--Amtrak may indeed pull this one out. Departure time at Philadelphia is 10:30, and 35 miles of fast, clear track lie ahead as we race into the Pennsylvania countryside.

Time remains, however, to restore the status quo, and we don't get far. At exactly 10 o'clock there is a sharp hiss of air--almost a sneeze--from below the train, throwing us into emergency. As 179 bucks to a halt, we lose the additional air of a small sigh and shake our head. We remember that when this happened last --leaving Stamford last week--we were stopped for 4 minutes as trainmen scratched their heads aloud to each other over the PA. This time we're moving cautiously in less than a minute, tho some distance passes before we again risk full speed, and by now we have, as the saying, goes, two chances of reaching Philadelphia on the advertised: slim and none. At length we swing into town and with the game over--our vision at this point is somewhat colored--the fans slowly get up and head for the exits. We pound into 30th Street at 10:33.

Actually, of course, the net delay was not serious, and the run from New London --picking up several minutes on a fairly unpadded schedule and averaging 52.4mph with stops--was not bad. True, we're not taken with everything about Amfleet trains, but we appreciate knowing in advance what to expect from the equipment, and the new cars offer a consistent level of service which is, we think, higher than before. And, well--we gain the waiting room and frown a bit as we see our arrival posted "ON TIME"--maybe next trip.

HORSES AND HOUNDS MEET AT OK CORRAL

by Peter Roehm

What's this? The Horse (iron, that is) and the Hound (of similar material) are sleeping in the same corral these days. Who would have ever thought it, what with NAMBO and its members bad-mouthing Amtrak for the past year. Still it is strange that the June issue of Russell's Bus Guide has a full-page announcement on the inside back cover under the signature of Greyhound's executive vice president asking for support for NAMBO's position on Amtrak funding, yet Greyhound's veep of sales is in the Northeast smiling and shaking hands with Amtrak's veep of marketing.

Effective June 23, Amtrak, Greyhound and Bonanza Bus began a joint intermodal operation linking points on Amtrak with non-rail stations on Cape Cod and into northeastern Massachusetts, southeastern New Hampshire, Maine and New Brunswick. One can now purchase a joint ticket and step from an Amtrak train to a Greyhound bus right at South Station or walk a short distance from the Providence depot to the Providence bus station. Greyhound's new Maritime schedule shows the Boston-Amtrak stop, and Amtrak has issued Form 200, New England Joint Rail-Motor Coach Timetable, which shows the service from Washington and New York to Providence and on to the tip of the Cape at Provincetown or from Boston to as far north as St. Stephen, N.B., where connections can be made with SMT (Eastern) buses.

So far (June 25) in Boston there has been absolutely no publicity about this new service by either Greyhound or Amtrak. There was a short inaugural ceremony at South Station on June 24, but just a handful of people were on hand. The newspapers have said nothing, either free or in paid ads, and neither has TV. It is almost as if no one should really know it exists.

The Boston ceremony was delayed as train 168, the BICENTENNIAL, was 27 minutes late, much to the grinning of Greyhound officials standing in the 95° sun waiting for the show to begin. Fortunately, they had a new air-conditioned Challenger, 5980, in which to escape from time to time. No. 168 finally arrived, and but a few from Amtrak were on it to celebrate: Al Michaud, VP of Marketing, and Ed Wojtas of Amtrak News, and a few others. Another Michaud, of Michaud Bus Lines (which has bad-mouthed Amtrak in the Boston area), was aboard as a reporter for the Mexico City News. And, naturally, so was E. M. Frimbo. He was seen fleeing the heat from the train to the bus, quickly across the street to the railfan favorite, Essex Hotel, then back to the bus and never reappeared for the ceremony, preferring the comfort of the air conditioning. Massachusetts' Lt. Governor "Tip" O'Neill was on hand to represent Gov. Dukakis, but due to the train's late arrival, he had to leave for another engagement, so Ray Rourke of the MassDOT took his place--unusual in that Rourke is not all the pro-rail. Charles Kirkpatrick was Greyhound's rep (he being VP of Sales from Phoenix) and he and Michaud of Amtrak exchanged bus driver-conductor hats as a gesture of coming intermodal cooperation.

The question now raised is: with this new intermodal service in New England, will there no longer be any effort to restore passenger rail to Maine? Good question! This writer will attempt to find the answer. In the meanwhile, it will not be at all unusual to see a Bangor & Aroostook Railroad bus (thru service coach) meet an Amtrak train at Boston's South Station.

Can a Horse and a Hound find happiness together? Can intermodalism in passenger transport work? Here is a chance to really find out.

Mailing date of this issue of RTN is July 2. The Second July issue will be out about July 21. In between, our annual summer vacation. Happy summer vacationing from everyone at RTN, and be sure to watch for our Reader Survey issue, to be published in August.

Rails South

RIDING THE NEW PALMETTO AND COLONIAL

by Ken Maylath

The longest Amfleet run; the first use of Amfleet in the deep South; the first daytime schedule thru the Carolinas in several years. That Amtrak's summertime PALMETTO between New York and Savannah.

A rather formidable consist eased into the Baltimore station on the first Saturday of operation (June 19)--the PALMETTO being combined with the existing MURRAY HILL schedule between NY and Washington. GE electric engine, baggage, and 13 Amfleet cars. The baggage and eight Amfleets were destined for Savannah, and carried a good passenger load. Fifteen to 20 boarded in Baltimore, and 35 more in Washington. Car 1 was the Amclub--and seemed to carry a fair number of passengers. The first 2 coaches featured lower-density seating (60 seats) with a pair of dressing rooms in addition to bathrooms. At the rear was another Amclub--but not being used as a first class car, but rather as a substitute for the promised Amlounge.

Departure at Washington came a couple of minutes behind, with an on-time arrival in Richmond, after passing thru a brief downpour. A minor incident at Fredericksburg occurred when a young woman wanted to detrain from the head car, but no crew member was on hand to open a door. In spite of charging thru a couple of cars in an effort to find someone, she ended up getting a bonus ride to Richmond.

Amtrak doesn't advertise it as a connection, but it is possible to transfer from the PALMETTO to the eastbound MOUNTAINEER at Petersburg--with a taxi ride between stations. It's only a 40-min layover. In the other direction, the 19-min connection is a bit risky.

Maximum loadings take place between Washington and Richmond. After Petersburg, I counted about 225 aboard, plus a few babies. Good crowds detrained at such points as Rocky Mount and Fayetteville. Quite a few people seemed to be waiting around the stations for a look at the new train with its new equipment. As expected, the number aboard gradually dropped with each stop, with 25 or 30 going all the way to Savannah. There was business at the new stops of Dillon and Kingstree, SC, with around 8 detraining at Dillon.

Operations went smoothly as we ran a few minutes behind thru North Carolina, but schedule-passing had us back on the advertised after the servicing stop at Florence. The late-running METEOR/CHAMPION stabbed us for 15mins just before Charleston, and we lost a few more minutes in a meet with Auto-Train near Yemassee. Still, arrival came just 5mins behind in Savannah, on a schedule that not very demanding.

Along the way I tried a macaroni and ham airline-style meal which turned out okay. One complaint along the food line, however: the forward Amcafe was out of almost all sandwich and snack items--but not hot meals--several hours before the end of the run. Supply of those things in the Northeast is a problem that seems to crop up regularly. On the first days of a new run, of course, making food estimates can be tricky.

The combination of Amfleet equipment and generally good track over the RF&P and SCL made for a quiet and comfortable ride. There was a balky door in one coach, but such problems were minimal.

The PALMETTO does seem to be having a good start, and it would not be surprising to see the rumored extended version to Miami this winter.

The COLONIAL, train 166, waited for its 2:50pm Newport News departure with GE diesel, Amclub and 4 Amcoaches. For the first Sunday departure direct to the Northeast Corridor (June 20), 25 or so filtered aboard. Tidewater has been a fast-growing area since World War II, and a direct rail connection with Washington makes sense. This aside from the potential of the Williamsburg area. Another 25 or 30 stepped aboard at Williamsburg as rain began to fall. Most of them

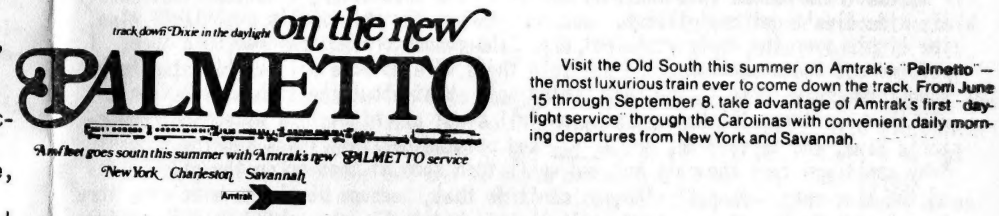
did not appear to be family groups taking the train rather than driving to the historic area. Actually, the Williamsburg area and nearby Busch Gardens didn't seem to be especially crowded on that mid-June Sunday.

I was curious about the backup movement from the C&O to SCL trackage at Richmond. It takes place in a small yard a mile or so north of the now-closed Main Street station. We paused a few minutes at an SCL yard office, then reversed direction for only 3 minutes. While the backup itself isn't that extensive, there is another 20mins of slow, 20-25mph running before reaching the new station. Much of this is in yard areas. It's a 35-40min procedure from passing the Main Street station to the new facility. We came in with five minutes to spare. Perhaps 15 minutes would be saved by eliminating the backup.

A modest exchange of passengers at Richmond still left 50-60 on the train. Northbound travelers have the option of taking the PALMETTO about an hour earlier.

Things went nicely on the RF&P except for a few minutes of slow running near Quantico due to signal problems. Still, we arrived at Washington's torn-up Union Station with a couple of minutes to spare. It was a busy time with the CRESCENT still being switched, four Amcoaches being added to our train, and the METEOR/CHAMPION arriving on time. At 8:05, on time, we were off on the last leg of a full weekend.

The COLONIAL doesn't seem to be attracting the crowds of the PALMETTO. But even as a new concept it's doing better than the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY connection that it replaced. It should do better as more people learn of it, and as the heart of the summer season arrives. Introduction of both trains was accompanied by considerable newspaper and broadcast advertising in the Northeast Corridor, at least, with newspaper ads including the complete schedules of both trains.



ABOARD THE PALMETTO INAUGURAL RUN

by Charles A. Dunn

The initial run of the PALMETTO, June 15 out of Washington, went without a hitch. Train 89's equipment functioned perfectly. The consist of the first run was: GE diesel unit 715 (see photo on rear cover of this engine on the COLONIAL); baggage 1373, Amclub 20676, Amcoaches 21800, 21801; Amcafe 20751; Amcoaches 21082, 21043. The train was five minutes early into Savannah. On board were a group of Amtrak executives, including Harold Graham, Dave Watts, Al Michaud, Bruce Heard, and Dennis Shumaker.

Revenue patronage was extremely light, and the train arrived at Savannah with only a handful of passengers. Reception along the route varied, for the most part nil, except for Dillon and Kingstree, SC, where this was the first passenger service since 1971. Kingstree stood out as giving the most rousing reception, as hundreds were at the station, many dressed in antebellum costumes.

When queried as to what would happen to Kingstree when the PALMETTO came off in September, Harold Graham stated that Amtrak would continue to stop with one of its other trains.

The Amfleet cars have vestibule stairs that retract up to close. The outside doors automatically close as the train starts up and reaches two mph. The best way to describe the ride inside is like being in an airplane that doesn't leave the runway. All food is airline style, microwave-oven heated, eaten at your seat, and receives mixed reviews.

All in all, the inaugural was a beautiful ride, and hopefully Amtrak can institute other long distance runs such as this around the country.

DAY THE RILEY DERAILED

by Robert Williams

As a Cincinnati middle school teacher, for the last four years I have been involved in a field trip to Washington the week after school closes for the summer. The first two years, everyone flew to Washington. Then, being the railfan that I am, I persuaded the travel agent to let me bring back 12 of the kids on the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY. The train was on time, and everyone enjoyed it. So this year we gave all the kids a chance to choose between the train and plane (train was $17 cheaper and arrived in Washington about 2½ hrs later). Of the 104 kids, 39 chose the train, and 4 teacher chaperones accompanied each of the two groups.

Train 51 pulled into our "Squire Jacks" Station in Cincinnati Monday night, June 7, on time. The baggage man, who moonlights with me ushering at Riverfront Stadium, was very friendly to all of us, and helped the kids get their gear on board. We had to struggle thru two cars to reach ours--43 of us, all in the same car. The platform is too small to handle a 12-car train.

The train pulled out on time, and as we crossed the Ohio River the kids tried to see thru the steamed windows, with little success. The air conditioning was working, however. (Last year it wasn't.) Joe Pollard, Cincy's Amtrak rep and an old friend, came out to see us off. Every year he comes to school and gives talks to my classes, gives out Amtrak buttons or pins, and schedules. He has a good color slide presentation. This time he brought some RILEY pamphlets and plastic Amtrak shopping bags to my 7th grade social studies classes.

As the train rolled into Kentucky and along the Ohio River, I noticed that about six kids didn't get any pillows. One of them was the principal's daughter! Also, the lights over the aisle would not dim. The conductor and trainman came thru. I pointed out these problems, and was told there were no more pillows (I later took some from empty seats in the cars behind us). What about the lights? "We can't sim them, so they will have to stay on full blast all night." I asked the conductor's name, and he told me, Mr. A___, and pointed out that I was smoking (I was). "Why can't you turn them all out and we'll turn some of them on on the side (a few of the blue ones worked)?" "No, we can't do that, because people have to come thru here." "Who? The diner behind us is closed, and the 3 cars behind that are going to be cut off at Russell, KY (to become the MOUNTAINEER)." I showed him my NARP and OARP membership cards and told him that I had stuck my neck out for this excursion, was responsible for all of these kids, and expected reasonable accommodations. He just walked away and we never saw him again. However, the trainman, a real gentleman named Vanderhoof, did come back and turn the lights out, and later brought two of the chaperones each an orange juice.

When the 4 rear cars were separated in Russell, it seemed to take far too much time, so we were about 20mins late into Huntington. A new crew, two nice fellows named Keaton and Pettry, took over the reigns. It seems that the former Mr. A___ is infamous on the Cinci-Huntington division.

We left Charleston at about 4:30am. I was in the last seat in the car (we were the "caboose" now). Just beginning to doze off. At 5:15am, June 8: Clickety-Clack; Clickety-Clack; Clickety-Thunk; Crash; Rumble (My God! This thing is off the tracks! Don't turn over! PLEASE!) Clank, Tinkle, Thunk, Thunk, Clunk. Pause. PSSSSSSS! (A steam line broke.)

"Mr. Williams, what happened?"

"Sit down, kids. I think the train has derailed."

"What?"

"Don't worry. Is anyone hurt?" (No answer--that's good.)

"I ran up to the front and jumped off the train. A small ray of light could be seen in the east which said that morning was coming to the West Virginia mountains. I saw a house light on. Kanawa Falls, West Virginia, population 250. Running

down to the house, I saw that the conductor was on the phone. Keaton, the trainman, was briskly walking back up the tracks in case another train was coming. An old one-legged WWII vet was sitting on the front porch. "May I use your phone when he is finished?" "Sure." Nothing said about collect calls, or long distance; just "Sure." Nice people. I called the travel agent at 5:30am and she called all 39 sets of parents to tell them that everyone was O.K. and we would be bused on to Washington. I realized at once that they must be informed so they would not be terrified by hearing it on the 7:30 news.

The kids had to stay in the car for 4½ hours before we could get them out of Kanawa Falls. They had a great pillow fight, and talked about it more than the train wreck! One woman, Rosa Ongaro, brought potato chips, cookies, milk, cheese and bread so we wouldn't starve. Another woman, Mary Francis Clark, brought gallons of coffee. The town fire department showed up, but there was nothing for them to do. However, they did help unload the baggage from the baggage car. It was the most excitement they have had there in years.

To get out of Kanawa Falls, one must go over a very small bridge. No way can a bus make it (they still talk about the Silver Bridge Disaster). When they finally brought in some pickup trucks, small buses and cars and unloaded us and baggage, we found ourselves the first off the train. The RILEY had not veered enough to the left to block the second track, and freights were running on it. We crossed the small bridge and were ready to wind up a very steep road to get acrossthe Kanawa River, when... we were stopped for 20 minutes by a very slow freight train!

We had breakfast at the Glen Ferris Inn, a fine hotel across the river. Amtrak should pay for the breakfast, since we got there at 10:15; our next stop was to have been Hinton, WV, where the diner would be put on. I asked the innkeeper if he would take a check (for 43 breakfasts), and without batting an eyelash he said yes. Everyone had bacon and scrambled eggs, toast, orange juice, coffee or milk, mighty tasty.

Six Greyhound buses pulled into the parking lot and everyone boarded (not all the passengers had had breakfast, but we did since we arrived first). With everyone aboard, the bus drivers proceeded to get out and go in to breakfast while we sat in the parking lot! Our bus had 43 seats and we had 43 people. Just right.

Our conductor told us to stop at White Sulphur Springs, where lunch would be on the C&O. We had quite a lunch at White Sulphur Springs--stale sandwiches, cookies and warm soda pop. We were the third bus in. Our kids got some food, and I noticed that all of the sandwiches were already gone as the fourth bus pulled in. I got the kids back on the bus, and we were on our way as soon as possible, as I didn't want to see all the feathers that were going to fly.

I told our driver that we wanted to go to our hotel upon arrival in Washington. He said his orders were to take us to the train station. I slipped him five dollars and said we would rather go to the hotel, since we had no way to get there, as far as I knew. We went to the hotel. We got to Washington at 5:50pm, 4½ hours late. We had only one complaint from a parent, who wanted some kind of a refund. This was disregarded. The kids got a free train wreck. What more could you ask for?

The trip back did not come off too smoothly. We did not all get to ride in the same car. A group of about 18 girl scouts beat us to the car that was reserved for us and refused to move. So 24 of us went in one car and 19 in the other. The air conditioning did not work in one car. The porter, Mr. Davis, who was very nice to the kids, was supposed to get off at Hinton. I wound up talking to an Amtrak supervisor named Mast, and told him I wanted a porter, and the air conditioning fixed, not failing to mention what had happened to us on our trip out. Sure enough, the porter stayed with us, and someone boarded (in Alexandria, I think) and repaired the air conditioning.

The food on the train was great! The head waiter, a Mr. Carter, knowing we were coming, shooed everyone else out of the diner and fed our kids first. They really

enjoyed their supper on the train.

We got into Cincinnati about 15 mins late, and the train stopped about 500 yards from the station. We waited a half hour before we could get off. I was told that a switch operated in Indianapolis would not turn, hence the delay.

About an hour after the wreck, I had walked back up the tracks, and saw that the roadbed had given away. Anyone could clearly see that the spikes were driven up higher and higher to the point where the rail on the left side turned right over. There were new railroad ties strewn along the side where the C&O was going to replace the old ones. They just hadn't gotten there fast enough. On the return trip I made sure to see what work had been done at Kanawa Falls. At about 2:30am I stuck my head out of the vestibule, getting filthy dirty in the process. They had the whole thing cleaned up in three days' time.

One of the kids' fathers was a C&O man. He told me the original word into Cincy of the wreck was that a coal train had derailed, and nothing was said of the RILEY. It turned out that a coal train had derailed in front of us, but we did not know of it.

Only two mothers wanted their Amtrak kids to fly back, but our flight was full, so everyone returned on the train. There were no complaints.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE PANAMA LIMITED, southbound train 59, derailed about 7:30am on Jun 30 near Goodman, Mississippi. A total of 25 passengers were hospitalized. The train landed where a section gang was working, and injured the section foreman and three other workers, and killed one worker who was pinned under a tree knocked down by the derailing engines. Preliminary reports said the train hit a broken rail at 70 mph on a section of fast track. The two engines, heater car, baggage, 2 sleepers, and the diner all turned over after derailing, while six coaches derailed but remained upright. While track was being repaired, trains were being detoured over the ICG's Tallahassee District thru Gwin, MS. The train has been using E units as the lead units recently, along with one 700-series GE diesel, because of automatic train control problems with the GE's..... THE ROCK ISLAND is petitioning to discontinue its two passenger trains because of Illinois state subsidy problems. The state has legislated subsidies to them and some Amtrak trains, but they were effective July 1, while the Rock Island wants a retroactive subsidy (see 1st Jun issue, p. 3 for full story)..... NEW YORK STATE Dept. of Transportation announced June 23 an extension until at least Sept 8 for operation of the ADIRONDACK. Commissioner Schuler said the state wants to keep the train, but ridership must improve "significantly" if they are to justify keeping it beyond Sept 8. He said they were encouraged by increased ridership (above 1975) in 4 of the last 5 months.....

* * *

WHILE THIS ISSUE of RTN is in the mail, a Bicentennial Transportation Display will occur in San Francisco--July 2-5, including an F40 diesel engine and some Amfleet equipment. Engine 219, baggage 1376, and Amcoach 21147 were moved into Oakland CA Jun 28 by freight train for the exhibit. In announcing the display (which includes equipment from other railroads), Amtrak said that Amfleet cars will go on the SAN JOAQUIN on or by Oct 31. Other Amfleet assignments in the West: nine cars are to be assigned to the Portland-Seattle trains on July 20..... AMTRAK HAS AGREED to carry the schedule of the Seattle-Victoria ship "Princess Marguerite" as a connection in its timetables in the near future. Loadings on the ship are reported up 25% this June from last year..... AMTRAK ISSUED NEW timetables for June 15, including a new national timetable, identified by green and yellow colors. An interesting innovation in the new Midwest timetable is the inclusion of a table that lists all Chicago arrivals and departures in time sequence. (It's also in the national timetable).....

A POSSIBLE HOME for the 4449 engine used on the Freedom Train is a transportation museum to be established in Portland, OR in the BN roundhouse near Union Station. Backers want to buy the roundhouse, and have received City Council approval..... A TRAIN WRECK in southern Belgium on Jun 27 killed 11 and injured 29. The express train from Amsterdam to Paris derailed near the Neufvilles station. Six of 12 cars left the track..... AMTRAK TRIED TO get the ICC to delay for 60 days its requirement that if car temperatures go out of the range 60-80° passengers must get alternate accommodations or transportation. The ICC said no. This took effect June 9, while other ICC decrees on segregating smokers, requiring first aid kits, and giving passengers written instructions on their rights, all were given 60-day delays..... REMEMBER THE LITTLE old steam train and horseman shown on our First

February cover--the postal envelope issued for the U.S. Centennial in 1876? Well, the Postal Service has announced that at a later date this year (not known yet) it will release for the Bicentennial a new stamped envelope bearing this same design, with only date and denomination (13¢) changed (see illustration of forthcoming design)..... NEW PAINT SCHEME for Amtrak engines (see our rear cover photo) is being applied to older engines as well. Train 4, the SOUTHWEST LTD, was seen at San Bernardino Jun 25 with engines 500, 502, and 617 (an F40). Engine 500 was in the new colors, similar to the 617.. TURBINE-POWERED TRAINS have no future, according to Paul Reistrup, because of their poor fuel economy--about half that of conventional diesels. The Amtrak President told Railway Gazette International (May) of this problem..... AMTRAK HAS INTRODUCED a new "Bicentennial summer menu" on its trains. The outside cover is a drawing which includes the statue of liberty, an Amfleet train, and scenes representing various sections of the country. Other designs appear on the breakfast and lunch menus. The children's menu has been redesigned. Amtrak in a press release listed some of the regional specialties of various trains: BROADWAY LIMITED --fresh strawberries & cream; PANAMA LIMITED--hominy grits; SUNSET LIMITED--chiliburger; S.F. ZEPHYR--steak sandwich on toasted French bread; LAKE SHORE--Yankee pot roast; COAST STARLIGHT--broiled salmon; LONE STAR--Gulf red snapper. Amtrak said that prices have edged up a bit: dinners range from $3.25 to $7.25.....

* * *

CONGRESSMAN EDWARD MADIGAN of Illinois said that of 30,000 voters surveyed in his district, 80.8% said that they would "prefer train to air transportation on trips of 5 hours or less if good trains were available"..... AMTRAK HAS INAUGURATED a stop at Aberdeen, MD this summer. A wire service release reported that the second train to use the stop caught fire and burned for 4 hours, blocking 4 tracks. Quipped the news service, "nobody expected fireworks" for the occasion..... EASTERN'S AIR SHUTTLE "leaves the train in its tracks", reads big newspaper ads by Eastern Airlines in the Corridor. Quote: "The Metroliner takes 3 hours to Washington. The Air-Shuttle can get you there in 60 minutes or less." An empty railroad track is pictured, with a billboard along the side, reading "You'd be there by now on the Air-Shuttle". One of our all-time favorite billboards was the old SP ad seen along highway 101 in California: "Next Time Take the Train"... STATE OF MARYLAND has purchased eight 66-yr old electric MU cars, MP54 type, from ConRail, and three RDC's from Amtrak..... THOMAS COOK TIMETABLE for June shows a massive reduction in European dining car service for economy reasons. Buffet or snack cars, or no food car at all, are replacing many diners. Most European trains now have only 1st and 2nd class coaches, with no lounges, diners, or domes. New European cars being introduced look more like American ones, with open seating instead of compartments. Cars are air conditioned with non-opening windows..... CANDIDATE JIMMY CARTER rode a Metrolinerin late May, Amtrak News reports, and Morris Udall just before the June 8 primary rode a regular train Newark-Trenton.....

B.C. GROUPS OPPOSE TRANSCON CUTBACKS - CN STAFF OPPOSES TRI-WEEKLY "SUPER"

by Angus M. M. Dundee

Rail Canada

Support for continued operation of transcontinental trains thru British Columbia was registered by many governmental and public interest groups at hearings in mid-June in Vancouver. Also, Canadian National witnesses opposed tri-weekly operation for the SUPER CONTINENTAL trains, at CTC hearings. Political groups such as the West Point Grey Conservative Association, Members of Parliament, and others joined in defending the runson the basis of energy conservation, safe travel, absence of pollution, and soaring air fares due to climbing fuel prices. Groups such as the Scientific Pollution & Environment Control Society presented similar statements.

MP John Reynolds said present conditions on both CP Rail and CN are "a disgrace" and suggested both lines are discouraging patronage. Reynolds said the solution most promising was to let the railways have their way, and get out of the passenger business, to be replaced by a new agency similar to U.S.'s Amtrak, which would bring new ideas and fresh administration to passenger service. Reynolds said the $167 million passenger deficit of 1974 was "real" and visible; but that the 1973 Canadian airport losses of $249 million were also real, even if less visible.

Suggestions were heard for tri-weekly operation. However, CN spokesmen said tri-weekly service "will not work." CN spokesman Russ Steele said alternate-day service by CN and CP Rail would be "unattractive to the market" and would be more costly than daily service, due to increased layovers for train staff, higher maintenance costs, and increased staff size.

Steele said that CN will add 5 cars to the SUPER CONTINENTAL for the 1976 summer season at a cost of $1.8 million, bringing the regular consist up from 17 to 22 cars. He said about $3.8 million was being saved by not running the SUPER in two sections this summer. CN sources said that a nationwide "SeeCanRail" pass was being developed to offer unlimited travel in Canada and the U.S., and possibly also Mexico. The passes could be paid for by credit cards.

CTC counsel Keith Thompson said that study of transcript testimony will be made following close of hearings set to resume June 28 in Ottawa. A preferred plan will be announced in September for proposed changes in the transcon service. It is expected that after additional public comment in the fall that a final plan will be made public by the end of 1976.

ELECTRIFICATION OF CP Rail's route between Calgary and Vancouver is no longer a question of "why" but of "when," according to a CP Rail executive addressing a transportation conference in Vancouver. Current estimated cost if $375 million.

Urban - Suburban Transit

BART trains were still running July 1 altho a union workers' contract had run out at midnight, and talks were being held. Late in June state legislative analyst Post said that BART's deficit would have to mean cancellation of hte weekend service promised this year, as well as thru Richmond-Daly City runs..... Long Island Rail Road began first runs of a combination electric-gas turbine commuter train on its Oyster Bay and Port Jefferson branches June 17..... Washington's Metro system said June 25 that 44% of its 20,000 daily patrons are from Virginia and Maryland suburbs--a surprise since only 4.6 miles of the system are in operation yet..

A gunman on Chicago's elevated line between South Side and the Loop opened fire on fellow train passengers, wounding four persons, at least two of them seriously, on June 17..... UMTA in late June granted Atlanta an additional $50.4 million to help build its rapid transit system; opening is planned for Dec 1978..... The DOT said its Bikeway Demonstration Program deadline for submission of proposals has been moved from Jun 1 to Aug 1 (see Federal Register, Jun 10)..... Houston is

 seeking UMTA funds for a projected rapid transit system.....

Express Ads

Dining car china dishes and glasses, several railroads. Stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kansas 67213.

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CUSTOM AMTRAK BUTTONS -- Special large 3" buttons, with "Why not Madison??" or "People Come First" or "The Turbos are Coming!!" or "The Future in Transportation" or "The Energy Mizer", each with large Amtrak logo below. $1 each, or 4 for $3, any Mix, Julie Kreunen, 305 Yosemite Tr, Madison, Wisc. 53705.

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